To the Chairman and members of the
Petersfield Urban District Council.

Gentlemen.

During the year 1898 - 85 births and 42 deaths were registered in the Urban District of Petersfield, as against 66 births and 56 deaths in 1897. Estimating the population of the District as 3190 the births were equivalent to an annual birth rate of 26.6 per thousand, the mean birth rate of the Urban District since its formation in 1893 being 24.2 per thousand, and that of England and Wales for the fifty years 1843-92 being 33.8 per thousand.

The deaths were equivalent to an annual death rate of 13.1 per thousand, the mean death rate of England and Wales in the eight years 1890-97 being 18.46 per thousand, and that of the County of Southampton for the same period 14.68 per thousand.

Of the 42 deaths 20 occurred in public institutions, viz:- 12 in the Union Workhouse and 8 in the Cottage Hospital, and of these 14 occurred in persons not belonging to the District. Deducting these and adding the deaths of an inhabitant of Petersfield who died away from home, we get a corrected total of 29 deaths, equivalent to a death rate of nine per thousand, the lowest which has been recorded since the formation of the Urban District. The mean corrected death rate of the previous five years was 14.3 per thousand. Of the 42 deaths registered in the District 19 occurred in persons over

seventy years of age, of whom eight had exceeded 80 years, and one had attained the patriarchal age of 93.

Two deaths were registered of children under one year of age. One of these was caused by Diarrhoea; on the other, aged 14 days, an inquest was held, and the verdict of the jury was that the death was caused by want of proper nourishing food, due to ignorance on the part of the parents. In Berlin the death certificates of children under one year must state whether the infants were brought up at the breast or upon artificial foods. It would be well if this plan were adopted in this country. The deaths under one year were equivalent to an annual death rate of 23.5 per thousand births. In the six years that have elapsed since the formation of the Urban District the mean annual death rate under one year has been 78.1 per thousand births registered, that of England and Wales for the ten years 1884-93 being 144.

Eight deaths were assigned to old age; two were due to suicide. No death occurred from Zymotic disease. Three deaths were caused by Phthisis, and two by other forms of Tubercular disease. While Zymotic diseases (excluding Influenza) have during the six years 1893-8 caused 16 deaths in the District, Phthisis and other forms of Tuberculosis have been responsible for 38. It is now fully recognized that Tuberculosis is a preventible disease; in the last 45 years there has been a reduction in the mortality

caused by it equivalent to an annual saving of 45000 lives in England and Wales. Better wages, and consequently better food and clothing have doubtless contributed to effect this reduction in the mortality, but it has been chiefly brought about by improved ventilation and freer access of sunlight both in the dwellings and places of labour of the working classes: but while there has been in the last half century a reduction of nearly forty per cent in the mortality from Tubercular diseases as a class, there has been an actual increase amounting to 24 per cent in the deaths of infants under one year of age from that form which affects the abdominal organs, — usually designated Tabes Mesenterica. In the annual Report addressed to you in February 1894 it was stated that Tuberculosis may be contracted by drinking the milk of cows suffering from this disease. This statement has been abundantly confirmed by the facts which have been brought forward by Sir Richard Thorne in the Harben lectures recently delivered by him. He has shewn that by the most moderate estimate at least 25 per cent of the milch cows in this country are tuberculous — that in about one third of these the disease affects the udder of the animal, that the milk of cows thus affected contains tubercle bacilli, and that such milk can be proved by experiment to produce Tuberculosis in animals that are fed on it. The Report of the Royal Commission says "that the milk of cows with tubercle of the

udder possesses a virulence, which can only be described as extraordinary. As most of the milk consumed in this country comes from dairies in which the milk of different cows is mixed, the chance of any given specimen being infected is considerable. To stamp out tuberculosis in cattle, or to prevent the sale of infected milk by legislative enactments would be a formidable and costly undertaking, but the dangers arising from the consumption as a food of tubercle infected milk can be entirely avoided by the simple process of boiling. Sir Richard Thorne in the lectures before referred to states "that the inhabitants "of the United Kingdom stand almost alone "amongst civilized nations in the habitual use "of uncooked milk as a food. This is the more "to be regretted because by reason of this "practice human life, especially that of infancy "and childhood, is being sacrificed on a scale "which, to use the mildest term, is altogether "deplorable. That this should be so is also "altogether unreasonable in the face of the "certain knowledge we possess, and which is "set forth in the Report of the Royal Commission "of 1890 in the following words :- The most "deadly tubercular material can be "rendered absolutely innocuous, in so far as "any spreading of infectious disease is "concerned by the action of a temperature at "which water boils. And again :- It is sufficient "to state that boiling, for an instant even, "renders the tubercle bacillus absolutely "innocuous"

At Dé'caux in Normandy Dr. Dufour established a Society having for its object the supplying of sterilised humanised milk in sterilised feeding bottles. From the office of the Society every mother can obtain daily a basket containing as many feeding bottles of milk as the child will require during the day. The empty bottles and basket are returned when a fresh supply is obtained. The very poor pay one penny, the well to do are charged from 5d. to 9d. per day. At Dé'caux where the experiment has been tried for three years, the infantile mortality has been reduced fifty per cent. Now that the artificial feeding of infants is the rule rather than the exception the experiment is worthy of imitation in this country, and would certainly result in a large saving of infant life.

On the 4th January in this year an Inquiry was held at Peterefield by one of the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, to consider the application of the Isolation Hospital Committee for permission to borrow money for the erection of the proposed Hospital. The sanction of the Local Government Board has not yet been received, but we may hope that the Hospital will be ready for use before the end of the present year.

As a consequence of recent legislation it is probable that at no distant date, it may devolve on you to provide hospital accommodation for Small Pox Patients. It is contrary to the regulations of the Local Government Board to receive such persons into

Hospitals in which patients suffering from Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria and Typhoid are treated. A separate building will therefore be required. It has been proved pretty conclusively that Small Pox hospitals are centres from which infection spreads to people in the neighbourhood in direct proportion to their proximity. In the Sheffield epidemic of 1884-8 the Small Pox hospital was in the centre of the Town, and within a radius of 500 feet round the hospital the number of people attacked was twelve times as great as in the rest of the Town. This being so it will be prudent to make timely efforts to find a suitable site sufficiently removed from habitations, on which a temporary hospital might ~~may~~ be erected at a short notice when required.

To those who believe in the preventive value of Vaccination it may be well to point out that by the provisions of the Vaccination act of 1898, any person can claim without fee the attendance, at his own residence, of the Public Vaccinator for the purpose of vaccinating any members of his family who have not yet undergone the operation, or of revaccinating any who have not been vaccinated within the preceding ten years. The Local Government Board supplies the Public Vaccinator with Glycerinated Calf Lymph which has been microscopically examined in order to insure that no extraneous germs are present in it, and every calf from which lymph has been obtained is slaughtered and examined by a

veterinary surgeon, and should it prove to be affected with Tuberculosis or other disease than Cow Pox, the lymph it has furnished is rejected. The operation of Vaccination is performed with antiseptic precautions, so that it is practically impossible that any other disease than Cow Pox can be introduced into the system.

There was a slight outbreak of Scarlet Fever in October. Four cases occurred in a house in Elm Terrace, two in Beckham Lane and two in the Borough. The cases all occurred about the same date and the disease was probably contracted in the hop gardens. In December another case occurred at a shop in the Station Road. The usual precautions were taken and there was no further spread of the disease.

I append summary of proceedings taken during the past year, and also tabular statements of deaths and infectious sickness, and have the honour to be,

Gentlemen

Your obedient servant

W. Leachman

M.D. M.R.C.S. D.P.H. Camb.

Medical Officer of Health

Fairlea, Peterfield

23rd February 1899

The following proceedings were taken during the year 1898.

February 4th. In conjunction with the Vice-Chairman of the Urban Council and the Clerk of the Joint Hospital Committee, the Medical Officer had an interview with the Officials of the Local Government Board at Whitehall with a view to obtaining the sanction of the Board to a less costly Isolation Hospital than that for which Mr. Crickmay had submitted plans. After a long interview the plans of a smaller Hospital at Marlborough were produced and a modification of these has been adopted by the Committee.

April 6th. Two samples of water from Mr. Whittington's and Mr. King's in Chapel Street were examined. Both came from the same Well, which was situated under the cellar of Mr. King's house. They were typical instances of sewage polluted water, and were sent as being probably the cause of illness in one of the families using the water. In consequence of the report on the character of the water the well was disused and the town supply substituted.

September 6th. A Cottage in Sussex Road lately in the occupation of George Mason was inspected and reported unfit for habitation.

September 9th. The new Reservoir was visited. Letter sent to the Council reporting on the liability of the Reservoir to contamination with dust leaves &c owing to its uncovered condition

October 5th. The cottage in Sussex Road above referred to was again inspected, and found in the occupation of James Pennicott, his wife and two children. Reported to the Council as a case of over crowding.

October 5th. Notification of four cases of Scarlet Fever at Mrs Walter Smith's, Elm Terrace was given. The house was visited and directions given to keep the remaining child from school, and to avoid contact with other children.

October 21st, 23rd & 25th. Samples of water from the two Reservoirs were examined. All were fair samples of drinking water, one from the old Reservoir especially, being bright, clear and free from sediment.

October 25th. Two cases of Scarlet Fever were notified at Mrs Knight's Beckham Lane. The house was visited and directions given as above.

November 3rd. Two cases of Scarlet Fever were notified at Mrs Gale's in the Borough. The house was visited and directions given as above.

November 3rd. A Sample of well water from a Cottage at the Causeway in the occupation of Mr. Gambler was examined. The water was contaminated with sewage from a manure heap, and condemned as unfit for domestic use. Letter to the Council.

November 6th. Cottages at the Boro' Hill belonging to Mr. Edward Weller were examined. One of the closets was found to be leaky. Letter to the Council.

December 20th. A case of Scarlet Fever was notified at Mrs Binsted's Station Road. The house was visited and directions given as above.